

The Knowledge Bank at The Ohio State University

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Coach Builders

By L. E. Kleinmaier

A million and a half hands moving swiftly but with the utmost care while 750,000 youthful minds are attentively directed toward their work—the construction of miniature Napoleonic coaches. These boys are striving for an attainable goal and, during their spare moments, are dreaming of the day when they will be selected to attend the annual “banquet of champions.” Each one has his heart set upon being the recipient of a national prize.

These craftsmen, whose ages range from 12 to 19 years, are competing for one of the twenty-four University Scholarships awarded by the Fisher Body Craftsman's Guild. A total of \$51,000 is to be presented as the 1933-34 awards for the Guild's annual contest.

Prizes are awarded by an International Board of Judges, of which Dean E. A. Hitchcock is a member. Fourteen of the most outstanding men in the academic and industrial engineering field constitute this group. They donate a portion of their time to select those privileged few, who, through their determined effort, have constructed prize-winning models of the Napoleonic coach.

Any boy who becomes a member of the Guild can consider himself highly privileged. It is an organization with a selected membership. Each application must be signed by the high school principal, the manual arts teacher, and the boy's parent, stating that the boy who is making application is one who would take advantage of such opportunities as the Guild offers. No fees are required for membership and plans for the construction of the model coach are sent gratis to the Fisher Cratsmen.

A most valuable education is derived from membership to the Fisher Craftsman's Guild. The boy who is a craftsman learns to read drawings, to work accurately to specifications and becomes skilled in the manual arts.

The models are checked in every minute detail as to fidelity to scale and the degree of proficiency shown in woodcraft, metalcraft, trimcraft, and paintcraft. Nothing is overlooked. After the preliminary judging has been accomplished, (which is as detailed as the final inspection), the selected coaches are judged by the Honorary Board and the winners determined.

The winners and awards are announced at the annual banquet. Many celebrities enter into the festivities. During the past three years, Graham McNamee, Floyd Gibbons and Edwin C. Hill have broadcast the awarding of the scholarships.

It is true that many of the boys who enter the competition are greatly disappointed when they learn that they are not one of the prize winners. Others have the perseverance to build a better model for the next contest and often receive a much coveted scholarship.

Whether the boy is a winner or not, if he has entered the competition whole-heartedly, he has received more than enough good from the knowledge he has acquired to well repay him for the many hours he has spent in constructing his model.